

BUILDING READERS®

How Families Can Help Children Become Better Readers

Vancouver Public Schools
Connecting Families and Schools

Get your family into a reading routine at the beginning of the school year

Reading with your child every day is one of the best ways to improve her reading skills. Establish a regular reading time at the beginning of the school year, and it will become routine in no time!

To develop reading routines and make reading a regular part of your family's schedule:

- **Bring books anywhere** your child may need entertainment (in the car, on the bus, in line at the grocery store, etc.).
- **Read favorite books** at the breakfast table before school.
- **Visit the library regularly** and fill a special bag with new books to read.
- **Celebrate what you read.** Have themed book dinners as a family. Hang a paper "reading tree" on the wall and add a leaf for each book your child reads.



Source: "Family Reading Traditions," Family Reading Partnership, niswc.com/family_reading_routines.

"A book is the only place in which you can examine a fragile thought without breaking it."

—Edward P. Morgan

Teach your child 'active' reading strategies

Your child's homework is to read a passage of his textbook. He looks the section over, and he's ready to begin. Help him read "actively," rather than just reading straight through without stopping. This involves doing things while he reads. Remind your child to:

- **Stop and think.** What are the main points? What has he learned? Is anything confusing? How does the material relate to other things that he has learned?
- **Restate what the book says.** If your child puts things in his own words, it may reassure him that he "gets it."
- **Make a list of confusing points.** This will help your child figure out exactly what concepts he needs to ask his teacher to clarify.

Source: "Lesson #11—Textbook Reading, Part 2," PinkMonkey.com, niswc.com/textbook_reading_strategies.

Talking with your child builds reading and language skills

Talking with your child provides countless benefits. When he talks with you, your child builds vocabulary and conversation skills. He develops thought patterns and makes connections that will boost language and reading skills, too.



So talk with your child often. Ask about what he's learning in school. Discuss his hobbies and interests. And of course, talk about what you're reading together!

Discuss common elements of word families

To make reading easier for your child, focus on word patterns. Together, list words that sound and look alike, such as *walk*, *talk* and *chalk*. Grouping words with similar endings can make them easier to learn.



Source: "Word Families Can Help Struggling Readers," Literacy Connections, niswc.com/word_families.

Make reading appealing to your child

As children grow older, reading may become less attractive to them. To prevent this problem, make reading irresistible to your child. Here's how:



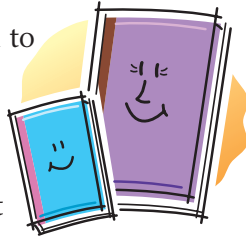
- **Encourage your child to read** age-appropriate materials she enjoys.
- **Create a cool reading spot.**
- **Let your child stay up** on weekends to read.
- **Suggest a book swap** with friends.

Launch a family book club!

The beginning of the school year is the perfect time to get everyone in the family excited about reading together—and starting a family book club is a great way to do it.

To get your book club started:

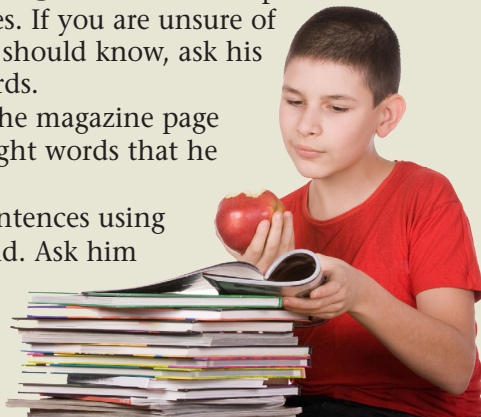
- **Pick a time.** Designate one evening a month to be your book club night.
- **Get everyone involved.** Have your child invite everyone from siblings and grandparents to join you on the big night.
- **Choose a book.** Find something exciting that no one has read yet. Make a schedule for sharing the book so that everyone will have time to read it before you meet up to discuss it.
- **Talk about the book.** What did everyone think about the characters? What differences of opinion did family members have? What was each person's favorite or least favorite part?



Search for sight words in magazines

Sight words are words your child can recognize and produce without stopping to sound them out. To help him practice them, grab an old magazine or newspaper and then:

- **Write a few of your child's sight words** at the top of some magazine pages. If you are unsure of sight words your child should know, ask his teacher for a list of words.
- **Ask your child to search** the magazine page and circle any of his sight words that he finds.
- **Have your child create** sentences using the words that he found. Ask him to read the words back to you and review their meanings as well as how they are spelled.



Q: My child is learning to read, but it's hard for her. She doesn't want to pick up books at home. How can I help?

A: Make books around the house as appealing as possible. Choose stories that include mostly familiar words. Look for subjects she loves or new topics she might embrace. Also consider books with short items

to read, such as jokes or rhymes. Books with appealing pictures are great, too!

Do you have a question about reading? Email readingadvisor@parent-institute.com.

Help your child find time to read

Reading for a few minutes before breakfast or while waiting for the bus adds up! To help your child find extra time to read:



- **Suggest reading as an option** when she says she's bored.
- **Help your child schedule** time for pleasure reading.
- **Try not to interrupt** her when she is reading.

For lower elementary readers:

- **Max's Words** by Kate Banks (Frances Foster Books). Max watches his brothers collect stamps and coins, but they won't share. So Max finds something of his own to collect.
- **Tricky Vic: The Impossibly True Story of the Man Who Sold the Eiffel Tower** by Greg Pizzoli (Viking). Learn about Robert Miller, who developed a sneaky plan to make money off France's famous landmark.



For upper elementary readers:

- **A Room With a Zoo** by Jules Feiffer (Michael di Capua Books). Julie loves animals, so she devises a plan to get as many pets as she can.
- **The Mummy's Mother** by Tony Johnston (The Blue Sky Press). When a mummy's tomb is disturbed, the mummy of a 10-year-old waits to see what will happen to his family.

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